

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of manufacturing a micromechanical component, the method comprising:
 - providing a substrate having a front side and a back side;
 - patterning the front side of the substrate;
 - at least partially covering the patterned front side of the substrate with a protective layer containing germanium;
 - patterning the back side of the substrate; and
 - at least partially removing the protective layer containing germanium from the patterned front side of the substrate.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the substrate has a wafer substrate, a first sacrificial layer situated on the wafer substrate and a micromechanical function layer situated on the first sacrificial layer, the micromechanical function layer forming the front side and the wafer substrate forming the back side.
3. (Currently Amended) The A method according to claim 1 of manufacturing a micromechanical component, further the method comprising:
 - providing a substrate having a front side and a back side;
 - patterning the front side of the substrate;
 - at least partially covering the patterned front side of the substrate with a protective layer containing germanium;
 - patterning the back side of the substrate;
 - at least partially removing the protective layer containing germanium from the patterned front side of the substrate; and
 - forming a hard-surface mask on the front side of the substrate, the protective layer being formed selectively in openings in the hard-surface mask.
4. (Original) The method according to claim 3, further comprising applying the

protective layer to an entire portion of the back side of the substrate.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The A method according to claim 4 of manufacturing a micromechanical component, further the method~~ comprising:

- providing a substrate having a front side and a back side;
- patterning the front side of the substrate;
- at least partially covering the patterned front side of the substrate with a protective layer containing germanium;
- patterning the back side of the substrate;
- at least partially removing the protective layer containing germanium from the patterned front side of the substrate;
- forming a first hard-surface mask on the front side of the substrate; and
- forming the protective layer over an entire surface of the first hard-surface mask.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 5, further comprising forming the protective layer over an entire surface of a nucleation layer ~~over the entire surface~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~4~~ 5, further comprising:

- forming a second hard-surface mask on the back side of the substrate;
- and
- etching a cavern into the back side when the front side is covered at least partially by the protective layer.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, further comprising:

- after etching the cavern, removing the protective layer from the front side;
- and
- subsequently etching trenches in a micromechanical function layer via a first hard-surface mask.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, wherein the protective layer is also provided on the back side, and wherein the method further comprising comprises:

- patterning the protective layer on the back side to forming form the second hard-

surface mask from the protective layer on the back side.